

Epping Forest District Council
Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

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1. Introduction

Everyone has the right to be safe when accessing services provided by Epping Forest District Council. The purpose of this policy is to help the Council meet its legal duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to discharge its legal obligations towards adults with needs for care and support. It also sets out the roles and responsibilities of the Council in working together with other professionals and agencies to safeguard vulnerable groups from all forms of abuse and neglect.

As part of the Council's commitment to robust safeguarding, it has a Corporate Safeguarding Group consisting of representatives from each Directorate. Each member of this group is responsible for ensuring that all colleagues across the Council are aware of the safeguarding policy and procedures.

1.1 Mission Statement

"Epping Forest District Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children, young people and adults with needs for care and support, as service users, residents and visitors to the area. The Council acknowledges the importance of working with partner agencies to ensure that children have safe, healthy and happy childhoods and that young people and adults with needs for care and support are given the support they need to enjoy good quality of life and well-being".

This Mission Statement is underpinned by the following:

- valuing, listening to and respecting children, young people and adults with needs for care and support as well as promoting their welfare and protection;
- provision of a current and comprehensive Safeguarding Policy and Procedures which are accessible and promoted to all staff;
- strategic planning and decision-making which considers the impact on children, young people and adults with care and support needs.

1.2 Aims

In order to meet its safeguarding duties and responsibilities, the Council will:

- carry out checks via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and use its Recruitment and Induction Procedures to prevent unsuitable people from working with children, young people and vulnerable adults;
- ensure all employees receive suitable training to understand the types of abuse and their roles and responsibilities with regard to the relevant Council policies and procedures;
- conduct regular reviews of safeguarding practice throughout the organisation;
- ensure that the welfare and needs of children and vulnerable groups are considered by all Members, employees, volunteers and contracted services when taking decisions in relation to service provision;
- take seriously and respond appropriately and expediently to all concerns, incidents and allegations;
- prevent abuse by promoting good practice amongst staff confidence in reporting any concerns;
- work in partnership with other agencies in order to safeguard children, young people and adults with needs for care and support and share information where required and appropriate; and,
- undertake a complete review of safeguarding policies and procedures annually and in line with any changes in legislation.

1.3 Scope

This Policy applies to all services within the remit of Epping Forest District Council. It covers all aspects of safeguarding for service users, their families, carers, supporters and local residents. It applies to all EFDC employees, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, permanent, seconded or temporary, casual workers, voluntary workers, work experience students, agency staff, consultants, outside hirers and other contracted persons whatever their position, role, or responsibilities. This also applies to work carried out in all settings (whether Council premises or at external, privately hired venues).

2. Definitions

2.1 Safeguarding

This includes all forms of activity that aims to protect or promote the welfare of individuals and/or groups of people, which ensures prevention of harm, such as safe recruitment, staff training, awareness raising, provision of activities designed to promote inclusion, personalised risk management and risk assessments, confidential data storage, information sharing and referral.

2.2 Abuse

The 10 main types of abuse are Physical; Domestic Abuse; Sexual; Psychological/Emotional; Financial or Material; Modern Slavery (including Human Trafficking and Child Sexual Exploitation); Discriminatory; Organisational/Institutional; Neglect or acts of omission; and Self-neglect (which includes Hoarding).

For more information on how to spot the signs and symptoms, see the Safeguarding page on the intranet.

2.3 Children and Young People

The legal definition of a child according to the Children Act 1989 is 'a person under the age of 18', including pre-birth.

2.4 Adult Safeguarding

The Care Act 2014 has established a new statutory framework for care and support including adult safeguarding, which is designed to prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to adults with care and support needs.

The statutory framework introduced under the Care Act applies to any person aged 18 or above who:

- has needs for care and support (regardless of the level of need and whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs)
- is experiencing, or is at risk of abuse or neglect, **and**
- as a result of those needs, is unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

The government has established six guiding principles that should underpin all adult safeguarding work:

Empowerment: People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.

Prevention: It is better to take action before harm occurs.

Proportionality: The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.

Protection: Support and representation to those in greatest need.

Partnership: Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.

Accountability: Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

The Care Act definition largely replaces the term 'Vulnerable Adults', but it is still used within this document.

2.5 Significant Harm

This is any physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect, accident or injury that is sufficiently serious to adversely affect health, development or quality of life. This includes any impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another person.

3. Recognising Abuse

Everyone should be aware of the potential indicators of abuse and know what to do if they have concerns. *It is however not the responsibility of the Council to investigate or determine whether abuse is taking place. The Council's responsibility is to identify and report abuse.*

The Council therefore aims to ensure that every member of staff is equipped with the knowledge and confidence to identify and deal effectively with any safeguarding situation or concern that arises.

4. Other related areas

4.1 Modern Slavery (including Human Trafficking): This involves the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of people, who with the threat or use of force, coercion, abduction, abuse of power or deception, are exploited for the purposes of prostitution, forced labour, slavery or other similar practices. This can occur either from one country to another or even within the same country, county or town.

Some victims are forced to work in places like cannabis factories, nail bars, brothels and car washes. There is no typical victim and some victims don't understand that they have been exploited and are entitled to help and support.

4.2 Prevent: The government's national counter-terrorism strategy called CONTEST, aims to reduce the risk to the UK and overseas interests from international terrorism. Prevent is a key part of the CONTEST strategy, led by the Home Office and its aim is to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism by working with individuals and communities who may be vulnerable to the threat of violent extremism and terrorism.

Prevent happens before any criminal activity takes place. It is about recognising, supporting and protecting people who might be susceptible to radicalisation.

4.3 Honour Based Abuse (HBA): HBA refers to crimes committed against a person as punishment for breaking an 'honour code'. It is usually imposed by a family or community.

4.4 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM): This is a term used to describe procedures that include the partial or total removal of the external female genital organs, such as female circumcision, excision or infibulation. This collective term also covers injury to the female genitalia for a cultural or non-medical reason.

4.5 Forced Marriage: the act of physically, emotionally, psychologically or financially pressurising someone to marry against their will. Forced marriages can occur in this country or abroad and differ from an arranged marriage, which is entered into freely by both people, despite their families taking a leading role in the choice of partner.

4.6 Child Sexual Exploitation: CSE involves children and young people receiving something, for example this can include accommodation, drugs and affection, which are given to them as a result of them performing sexual activities, or having others perform sexual activities on them. It can also occur without physical contact when children are groomed to post sexual images of themselves on the Internet. Vulnerable groups are particularly at risk such as looked after children, children leaving care, children missing from school, home or care, and children with learning difficulties.

4.7 Domestic Abuse: The Government's definition of domestic abuse is 'Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over, who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.' Domestic abuse has a devastating effect on victims, their families and the wider community and cuts across all boundaries of social group, class, age, religion, sexuality, gender and lifestyle. Everyone has the right to be safe from abuse and fear.

5. Responsibilities of EFDC

The Council's Leadership Team and Elected Members recognise the important role they play in ensuring the safeguarding agenda is driven across the whole organisation. They understand the Council's responsibility to work in partnership and share information with other agencies. The Council's Director of Communities is the Lead Professional for Safeguarding and the Assistant Director Community Services and Safety is the Lead Officer for the Council and is responsible for the direction and management of safeguarding within the organisation. The Council's Portfolio Holder for Safer, Greener and Transport attends the Corporate Safeguarding Group and is the Safeguarding Champion.

Safeguarding is referred to in senior management meetings and information is disseminated through service teams and included within service strategies and business plans.

6. Service Roles

There are a range of functions carried out by EFDC, which have a positive outcome on the wellbeing of children, young people and adults with needs for care and support, and staff in these service areas are in a position to identify safeguarding issues, which have a direct impact on vulnerable people. For example:

- 6.1 Housing Services** – The Council directly supports the health and life chances of children, young people and adults by improving standards of housing; preventing and responding to homelessness and by working closely with other local services and agencies. Other work includes allocation of housing to those in most need and proactive support to people with disabilities to enable them to get the necessary adaptations to help them participate fully in everyday life. Housing staff also work with MAPPA (Multi-Agency Protection Panel Arrangements) and MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Case Conference) to ensure vulnerable people are safeguarded within the district.
- 6.2 Community Safety** – As well as undertaking core work to reduce crime and fear of crime, the Community Safety Team plays a key role in ensuring the safety of local children, young people and adults. The Safeguarding Officers are a permanent part of the Community Safety Team and are responsible for receiving all safeguarding concerns from across the authority, triaging them and taking appropriate action. The Community Safety Manager and Officer direct the work of safeguarding on an operational basis. The team also provides a signposting service to vulnerable people to enable them to access local support.
- 6.3 Community Services** – The Community, Health & Wellbeing and Heritage, Museum and Culture Services provide a wide range of activities for children, young people, families and older people, which include holiday schemes, health improvement initiatives and community events. This work contributes significantly to the improved health of children and vulnerable adults, helps build self-esteem, confidence and improves resilience to potential harm or exploitation.
- 6.4 Planning Services** – This service can impact upon the wellbeing of children, young people and adults with care and support needs, through the design of new housing developments. The provision of play facilities and ‘green space’ ensures that families have facilities to enhance wellbeing and good design helps to ensure that people are safer in their communities.
- 6.5 Environmental Health Services** – Services provided by the Council’s Environmental Health Team include the monitoring of noise complaints, food hygiene and nutrition, but officers also inspect conditions in Council-owned, private rented accommodation and local businesses. The team also plays a key role as a licensing authority, as one of the four of the Licensing Act objectives in ‘protection of children from harm’ and CSE.
- 6.6 Financial Services** – With responsibility for administration of Benefit payments and Council Tax, the Council’s Financial Team helps to ensure that children, young people and adults with needs for care and support are protected from the effects of poverty and that family income is maximised.
- 6.7 The People Team** – This department implements the Council’s Recruitment Policy and Induction Procedures, so that all relevant employees are subject to the appropriate checks prior to appointment. The Learning and Development team monitors the level and type of safeguarding training required by staff and maintains records of training received and timeframes for refresher training.

7. Designated Roles in Epping Forest District Council

- 7.1 Elected Member Champion** - The Portfolio Holder for Safer, Greener and Transport holds the position of Member Champion for Safeguarding and is responsible for attending the Corporate Safeguarding Group and promoting the importance of safeguarding amongst all Members.
- 7.2 Safeguarding Lead Professional** – This position is held by the Director of Communities and has overall accountability for safeguarding children, young people and adults with support needs.
- 7.3 Safeguarding Lead Officer** – The Safeguarding Lead Officer is the Assistant Director – Community Services and Safety, who is responsible for advising the Lead Professional in regard to concerns, referrals and safeguarding allegations against staff. They also have overall responsibility for

ensuring that staff are aware of the Council's commitment to safeguarding, are appropriately trained, understand their responsibilities and have a range of safeguarding experience.

7.4 Safeguarding Lead Deputies – The Safeguarding Lead Deputies are the Community Safety Manager, Housing Options Manager, Community, Health & Wellbeing Manager, and Senior Corporate Fraud Investigator. These officers deputise for the Safeguarding Lead Officer as and when required.

7.5 Designated Safeguarding Reporting Officers – Those staff members attending the Corporate Safeguarding Group are known as the Designated Reporting Officers. They are responsible for disseminating safeguarding information, identifying training requirements of staff and providing best practice examples within their service areas.

7.6 Named Senior Officer (whistleblowing – allegations against staff)

The Assistant Director – The People Team, is the first point of call for staff reporting safeguarding allegations against employees and refers to the Lead Professional and Lead Officer on this.

7.7 Safeguarding Officers

The Safeguarding Officers are responsible for the operational management and implementation of the Council's Safeguarding Strategy, Policy and Procedures. Together they co-ordinate, promote and deliver safeguarding training. They ensure concerns are referred to the appropriate agencies and that they are recorded, monitored and reviewed.

8. The role of Council Staff and Members

8.1 Service Directors

Service Directors are responsible for ensuring that Assistant Directors, Managers and staff within their Directorate are aware of the contents of this Policy and the accompanying Procedures, and that the Council's duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults with needs for care and support are met and effectively discharged.

8.2 Assistant Directors, Managers and Supervisors

Assistant Directors, Managers and Supervisors are responsible for complying with the requirements of this Policy and accompanying Procedures and for the promotion of a staff culture which recognises the rights of children, young people and adults with needs for care and support and the Council's responsibility for their safety when receiving its services.

8.3 The People Team

The People Team is responsible for ensuring that safe recruitment procedures are followed and that appropriate checks are made. This includes Disclosure and Barring Service Checks prior to any employee that will have unsupervised/substantial contact with children and young people, or who will undertake certain prescribed activities with adults with care and support needs, before starting work with the Council. The People Team Assistant Director also has lead responsibility for dealing with allegations against members of staff.

8.4 Employees

All employees, volunteers and agency staff are responsible for complying with the requirements of this Policy and Procedures. Staff should take all reasonable steps to ensure (within the context of their duties) that risks are minimised and that children, young and vulnerable people are protected and their welfare promoted when using Council services.

To effectively implement this policy, **all** employees have a responsibility to:

- be aware of, and abide by this Policy and accompanying Procedures
- undertake safeguarding training at the level identified in respect of their work
- ensure that they work in such a way that they do not place vulnerable people in a position of risk
- report any incidents of safeguarding concern to their line manager immediately
- co-operate with any risk assessment process undertaken by their manager or designated person

- ensure that they behave appropriately towards any children, young person or adult with needs for care and support who they come into contact with whilst carrying out their duties
- seek advice (as per the procedures) in respect of any safeguarding concerns or the welfare of children, young people and adults with care and support needs.

Employees who come into contact with children, young people or adults with needs for care and support, whilst working away from their office base, or whilst lone working, must act in an appropriate manner and not put themselves at risk from allegations of inappropriate behaviour.

8.5 Elected Members

The Council is committed to ensuring that its Elected Members are appropriately trained and aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and those of the authority. This includes awareness of the Council's safeguarding duties under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 and The Care Act 2014. Safeguarding training is mandatory for Members as part of their core training programme.

9. Contractors

All reasonable steps are taken to ensure that contractors working for the Council are monitored appropriately. All contractors and sub-contractors working with, or providing services for the Council are required to demonstrate they have their own Safeguarding Policy and Procedures or agree to sign up to the EFDC Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, to ensure they meet the Council's safeguarding requirements. Where contact with children and adults with needs for care and support is a necessary part of the contracted service, it is the responsibility of the manager who is using the services of the contractor, to ensure that satisfactory DBS checks have been completed where appropriate and that contracted staff are vigilant in respect of safeguarding issues.

10. Grant Applicants

As a minimum, all organisations receiving funding from the Council will be expected to have a safeguarding policy and procedure in place, which is understood by employees and volunteers and available to service users, irrespective of how the grant has been awarded.

11. Safe Recruitment

It is a criminal offence for an employer not to undertake the appropriate checks on an employee working with children, young people and adults with care and support needs, or to knowingly give a job to someone who is inappropriate to work with these groups. The Council has therefore adopted the Essex Safeguarding Children Board's Recruitment and Employment Standards and takes all reasonable steps to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with vulnerable groups, regardless of their position.

All job descriptions are assessed to identify which roles are likely to involve regular/substantial unsupervised contact with children and adults with care and support needs. For all new employees, confirmation of employment will be dependent on satisfactory checks where appropriate.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Enhanced Plus checks are sought where staff will have unsupervised and substantial contact with children and young people or who will undertake certain prescribed activities with adults with needs for care and support as part of their duties or responsibilities.

12. Supervision

The Council is responsible for ensuring that its staff are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding and for creating an environment where they feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in their safeguarding role. This is reinforced through 'supervision', which can be part of staff 1:1 meetings or as a group and all staff are entitled to access this support.

These meetings might be planned or ad hoc and could involve monitoring work in hand, reviewing progress against work plans, developing solutions or simply discussing problems and concerns.

13. Training

The level to which individual employees should be trained in safeguarding is determined in accordance with Essex Safeguarding Children and Adults Boards guidelines. All staff will undertake the Council's basic e-learning training and staff who work directly with children or vulnerable groups will undertake the Council's bespoke Level 2 Safeguarding Training, which reinforces the basic learning and will enable them to be equipped with the knowledge and confidence to identify and report any incidents of abuse to the Safeguarding Team.

Council staff without access to email including trades staff will be provided with for example, Safeguarding 'Toolbox Talks', which are specially designed, short awareness sessions.

All Managers also need to undertake training, to ensure that they have a sound working knowledge of relevant legislation, fully understand their duty of care and responsibilities and can be advocates of best practice in safeguarding.

14. Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns about behaviour of others in the work place made in good faith without fear of repercussion.

The Council's Whistleblowing Policy covers any staff concerns about colleagues in regard to safeguarding children, young people and adults with care and support needs and staff need to feel confident in reporting these. The Policy provides guidance and assurance regarding the process to be followed in respect of raising concerns. It also provides details of alternative ways to report concerns confidentially outside of the Council.

15. Safeguarding Reporting Procedures

The SET (Southend, Essex and Thurrock) Safeguarding Guidelines outline the basic safeguarding procedures, which should be followed by all local authorities in Essex. The Council has however developed its own simplified safeguarding procedures and requires all staff and Members to follow these.

There may also be occasions when agencies in another county have to be contacted to report a safeguarding concern, for example, if an incident occurs at an EFDC activity but the child or adult lives in a neighbouring London Borough or county. Emergency contact information for these teams is given at the end of the Procedures.

16. External Agencies

Essex County Council: Essex County Council is the Children's Services Authority and provider of Adult Social Care for Essex. It has a duty to conduct enquiries where it's suspected that a child who lives in, or is found in a local authority area, is suffering from, or likely to suffer significant harm in the form of physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect.

Under the Care Act, there is now a duty to conduct enquiries regarding adults. EFDC has a duty to assist and provide information in support of these enquiries.

The role of the Essex Safeguarding Boards

Essex Safeguarding Children's Board (ESCB) is a statutory multi-agency organisation, which brings together agencies who work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. The objective of this Board is to coordinate and oversee the work of local partners and agencies in regard to safeguarding and to advise and direct improved safeguarding practice.

Essex Safeguarding Adults Board (ESAB). The Care Act 2014 placed the Adult's Board on a statutory footing. The Board oversees and leads adult safeguarding across the locality and is interested in a range of matters that contribute to the prevention of abuse and neglect. The Board must publish a strategic plan and annual report, setting out how it will meet its main objective and what the members will do to achieve these objectives. It must also conduct any Safeguarding Adult Reviews in accordance with the Care Act.

West Essex Stay Safe Group

West Essex Stay Safe Group consists of representatives including NHS, Essex Social Care, Police, Probation, Education, Voluntary Sector and District Councils. This group is responsible for delivering an action plan to improve safeguarding practice in West Essex and for considering actions to address emerging issues.

17. Monitoring and Review

This Policy and Procedure will be reviewed annually unless legislation or processes change in the interim.

Monitoring mechanisms include:

- Section 11 Audits and engagement with Essex Safeguarding Boards and sub groups.
- Recording of staff training at different levels.
- Reporting to the Council's Senior Management Team and Leadership Team.
- Participation in Serious Case Reviews/Domestic Homicide Reviews and safeguarding reviews.

18. Other relevant EFDC documents

Other EFDC policies and procedures that may be read in conjunction with, or be linked to this policy are:

- Honour Based Abuse Policy and Procedures
- Whistleblowing Policy (Confidential Reporting)
- Recruitment Policy and Procedures
- Domestic Violence in the Workplace – Policy and Manager's Toolkit
- Prevent Policy
- Safe Working Practice Guide
- E-Safety Policy

Staff should monitor internal Council bulletins and intranet pages for new and updated versions of relevant safeguarding policies.

19. External documents

This policy is intended to support staff working within EFDC and is supplementary to the:

- Southend, Essex and Thurrock (SET) - Child Protection Procedures.
- Southend, Essex and Thurrock (SET) - Safeguarding Adult Guidelines.

Staff should also see the Council's intranet in the 'Safeguarding' section for more in-depth information on various aspects of safeguarding.

Who is responsible for making a referral?

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and anyone can raise a safeguarding concern. If a member of staff sees something that worries them, they have a responsibility to report it. Staff are not however, responsible for deciding whether or not someone is being abused, or for carrying out investigations.

All safeguarding concerns should be sent to the Safeguarding Team in the first instance, although, out of hours, staff will need to make their own referrals as directed in the procedures.

Confidentiality and Consent

Employees must not discuss any allegations of abuse, substantiated or not, with:

- anyone from EFDC other than their line manager and other designated members of staff as outlined in the relevant safeguarding procedure;
- any member of an external agency (excluding Essex Social Care and Essex Police), other than as part of a formal investigation; or with,
- any other interested party, including parents, carers and relatives of the child, young person or adult without the express permission of the person with overall responsibility for the investigation.

Staff must consider whether seeking **consent** from a victim might increase the risk to them, cause an unjustified delay or if it could prejudice the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime.

Consent is not required where:

- other people or children could be at risk from the person causing harm
- it is necessary to prevent crime, or if a serious crime may have been committed
- there is a high risk to the health and safety of the adult at risk
- the person lacks capacity to consent*
- where the alleged perpetrator may go on to abuse others
- there is a statutory requirement
- the public interest overrides the interest of the individual
- when a staff member is the person accused of abuse, malpractice or poor professional standards.

*Mental capacity

The Mental Capacity Act (MCA) 2005 requires an assumption that an adult has full capacity to make decisions unless it can be shown that they lack capacity to make a decision for themselves, at the time the decision needs to be made. Any decision made, or action taken, on behalf of someone who lacks the capacity to make the decision or act for themselves, must be made in their best interests.

Issues of mental capacity and the ability to give informed consent are central to decisions and actions surrounding safeguarding adults. All interventions need to take into account the ability of adults to make informed choices about the way they want to live and the risks they want to take.

This includes their ability:

- to understand the implications of their situation.
- to take action themselves to prevent abuse.
- to participate to the fullest extent possible in decision-making about interventions.

Data Protection

All copies of the Safeguarding Report Form are retained on the Council's secure database, in accordance with data protection and as per the Retention of Records Policy. All copies of Referral Forms sent to Essex Social Care are retained by the Safeguarding Team, in a secure location to ensure confidentiality.

Information Sharing

Information sharing is a vital part of early intervention and preventative work, to promote welfare, for wider public protection and in improving outcomes for all. However, people want to be confident that their personal information is kept safe and secure, and that staff maintain their privacy.

Decisions about what information is shared and with whom will therefore be taken on a case-by-case basis. Information should be:

- necessary for the purpose for which it is being shared.
- shared only with those who have a need for it.
- be up to date and shared in a timely fashion.
- be shared accurately and securely.

In all cases where information is shared, the following information should be recorded:

- date and time.
- an accurate summary of information shared.
- who the information was shared with.
- whether it was shared with or without consent (if without consent, whether the child or family or employee were informed).
- how the information was shared and any receipt of it having been received.

Evidence-gathering and preserving

The Police are always responsible for the gathering and preservation of evidence to pursue criminal allegations against people causing harm. Staff should contact them immediately if they feel a crime has taken place. However, the first concern must be to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the alleged victim.

Staff can play an important part in ensuring that evidence is not contaminated or lost.

Staff should:

- try not to disturb the scene, clothing or victim if at all possible.
- try to discourage the vulnerable person from washing, showering or bathing, or from washing their clothes if the allegation or disclosure concerns a possible rape or sexual assault.
- secure the scene (e.g. lock the door if possible).
- ensure nothing is removed from the scene and it is left exactly as it was found.
- contact the Police and ask for advice if in doubt.

start the assessment process.

As the Safeguarding Team may need to cut and paste information from the Safeguarding Report Form onto external forms, it should be completed as accurately and carefully as possible. Staff should also reduce the amount of additional documents that are attached e.g. amalgamate and/or edit information rather than sending lots of emails to provide background information.

The Safeguarding Report Form will also act as an accurate record for staff to keep in their own confidential and 'locked down' files. Staff must remember that their reports may be used as evidence in a court of law or at a case review or inspection.

Making direct referrals

If staff have to make their own external referral (if it is out of office hours); they must send copies of this and any other accompanying material to the Safeguarding Team the next working day.

External safeguarding forms for Essex Social Care can be found on the relevant Essex Safeguarding Board Website: complete a SET SAF 1 for adults which can be found at www.essexsab.org.uk or a FORS Form for children, found at www.escb.co.uk.

Housing Services safeguarding procedures

In addition to the safeguarding procedures, the Council's Housing Service may need to make a referral to Essex Social Care in relation to homeless 16-17 year olds and intentionally homeless households with children. This contact is made for an assessment of whether they are a child in need to whom a duty is owed by Essex Social Care under terms of the Children Act 1989.

Other safeguarding procedures

It may be necessary to contact specialist agencies regarding some forms of abuse. There may also be extra forms to complete. Staff should always refer concerns to the Safeguarding Team, but if this is not possible, staff should follow the following procedures (sending information to the Safeguarding Team as soon as possible).

If you believe someone is in immediate danger or risk, call Essex Police on 999.

If it's not an emergency, call the Police on 101.

Modern Slavery (including Human Trafficking)

For advice staff should ring the **Modern Day Slavery Helpline** on **0800 0121 700**; or the **Salvation Army Helpline** on **0300 3038 151** (24 hours a day, seven days a week).

PREVENT (radicalisation)

The Safeguarding Team follow the usual SET Procedures *and* send a copy of the relevant form(s) to the specialist Police team via their email address: Prevent@essex.pnn.police.uk

Threats of suicide and self-harm

Please refer to EFDC Suicide Protocol and flow chart.

Domestic Abuse

Staff can report domestic abuse directly to Essex Police via their Domestic Abuse Central Referral Unit (CRU) by calling 101 extension 180340; or by calling the dedicated abuse non-emergency number 0800 358 0351.

For up-to-date information, staff should look at the Essex Police Website at www.essex.police.uk

If children or adults with needs for care and support are involved, staff should also contact Essex Social Care - see the '[Making direct referrals](#)' section above.

Procedure A: Immediate Risk

For incidents where staff believe that a child, young person or adult with care or support needs is in **immediate danger of physical or psychological harm** and that the situation calls for **immediate action or intervention**. (Staff may have witnessed the incident themselves, had a vulnerable person disclosure directly to them or they are given information from a third party).

In these situations, staff should:

1. **CALL 999** and report what they've seen or heard to the relevant emergency service.
If staff are able, they should ensure that they have all relevant details to hand before contacting the emergency services e.g. any relevant addresses, telephone numbers etc.
Record all details immediately in order to give as much information as possible to the emergency services and/or investigating agency. (These details will also form the basis of the Safeguarding Report Form which will have to be completed after the incident).
2. Stay until the Police and/or the ambulance crew arrive if they've witnessed an incident themselves.
3. Ask any other witnesses if they can stay and provide support to the victim if possible, but only if it's safe to do so without compromising the situation.
4. Talk to the victim and record whatever is said in writing as soon as possible, but only if the perpetrator is not at the scene.
5. Inform their Line Manager as soon as possible after the situation has been resolved and submit the Safeguarding Report Form to the Safeguarding Team **within one working day** of the incident occurring.

Staff should be as accurate as possible when recording information as it could be used in court.

Procedure B: No Immediate Risk

Where staff have their own concerns about a vulnerable person or if a third party has told a member of staff about their concerns. Also if a child, young person or adult with needs for care and support has disclosed something directly to the member of staff, which may be considered a safeguarding concern, or may involve a crime.

These concerns are of a **serious nature**, which staff believe **could lead to harm**, but where the victim is **not in any immediate danger** of harm and **immediate action is not required**.

Staff should:

1. Record what is said as accurately as possible.
2. Reassure the vulnerable person and explain that information will be passed on – that staff are unable to keep the information a secret and that they will be seeking help for them.
3. Report it to the Safeguarding Team via the Safeguarding Report Form within **one working day** of the concern being raised/established.

If staff are unsure whether their concern is a safeguarding issue, they should ring the Safeguarding Team or a Safeguarding Lead Deputy to discuss.

This procedure also covers allegations made against anyone acting on behalf of EFDC including volunteers or Elected Members.

Staff should:

1. Try to get a witness to their conversation with the person reporting the allegation if it is made in person.
2. Take accurate notes of the allegation and not ask leading questions. Staff should transfer this information in as much detail as possible to a Safeguarding Report Form as soon as they can. **DO NOT SEND THIS FORM TO THE SAFEGUARDING TEAM.**
3. Immediately contact the **Named Senior Officer** or Deputy Senior Officer:
 - **Assistant Director – People Team: Paula Maginnis on ext. 4536**; or in her absence:
 - **Safeguarding Lead Officer, Julie Chandler on ext. 4214**; or
 - **Safeguarding Lead Professional, Alan Hall on ext. 4004.**
4. If the allegation is made in writing, follow the above procedure from no. 3.

It will be up to the Named Senior Officer (or the Deputy/Safeguarding Lead in her absence) to determine whether the Safeguarding Report Form is forwarded to the Safeguarding Team.

Suspension of the staff member is not automatic and is considered a neutral act. Where suspension is not appropriate, consideration will be given to putting safeguards in place to protect the vulnerable person.